

THE SUPREME COURT



MAURA D. CORRIGAN, CHIEF JUSTICE

State Court Administrative Office
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Under the **territorial government** of Michigan established in 1805, the supreme court consisted of a chief judge and 2 associate judges appointed by the President of the United States. Under the “second” grade of territorial government established in 1824, the term of office was limited to 4 years.

First Grade

Augustus B. Woodward 1805-1824	James Witherell 1805-1824
Frederick Bates 1805-1808	John Griffin 1806-1824

Second Grade

James Witherell 1824-1828	William Woodbridge 1828-1832
John Hunt 1824-1827	George Morrell 1832-1837
Solomon Sibley 1824-1837	Ross Wilkins 1832-1837
Henry Chipman 1827-1832	

The **Constitution of 1835** provided for a supreme court, the judges of which were appointed by the governor, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, for 7-year terms. In 1836 the legislature provided for a chief justice and 2 associate justices. The state was then divided into 3 circuits and the supreme court was required to hold an annual term in each circuit. The Revised Statutes of 1838 provided for a chief justice and 3 associate justices.

The **Constitution of 1850** provided for a term of 6 years and that the judges of the 5 circuit courts be judges of the supreme court. In 1857, the legislature reorganized the supreme court to consist of a chief justice and 3 associate justices to be elected for 8-year terms. The number of justices was increased to 5 by the legislature in 1887. Act 250 of 1903 increased the number of justices to 8.

The **Constitution of 1908** provided for the nomination of the justices at partisan conventions and election at nonpartisan elections.

The **Constitution of 1963** provides that “the judicial power of the state is vested exclusively in one court of justice which shall be divided into one supreme court, one court of appeals, one trial court of general jurisdiction known as the circuit court, one probate court, and the courts of limited jurisdiction that the legislature may establish by a two-thirds vote of the members elected to and serving in each house.” Const. 1963, art. 6, § 1.

“The supreme court shall consist of seven justices elected at nonpartisan elections as provided by law. The term of office shall be eight years and not more than two terms of office shall expire at the same time.” Const. 1963, art. 6, § 2.

“One justice of the supreme court shall be selected by the court as its chief justice as provided by rules of the court. He shall perform duties required by the court. The supreme court shall

appoint an administrator of the courts and other assistants of the supreme court as may be necessary to aid in the administration of the courts of this state. The administrator shall perform administrative duties assigned by the court.” Const. 1963, art. 6, § 1.

The Michigan Supreme Court is the highest court in the state, hearing cases appealed to it from other state courts. Applications for **“leave to appeal”** are filed with the supreme court and the court decides whether to grant them. If an application is granted, the supreme court will hear the case; if denied, the decision of the lower court stands.

In addition to its judicial duties, the supreme court is charged with general administrative supervision of all courts in the state. This is referred to in the state constitution as **“general superintending control.”** The supreme court is responsible for establishing rules for practice and procedure in all courts.

The supreme court consists of 7 justices. One justice is selected every 2 years by the court as chief justice. Two justices are elected every 2 years (one in the eighth year) in the November election. Although nominated by political parties, the justices are elected on a nonpartisan ballot, separate from the ballot for other elective offices. Candidates for the supreme court must be qualified electors, licensed to practice law in Michigan, and, at the time of election, must be under 70 years of age. The salary of the justices is fixed by the State Officers Compensation Commission and paid by the state.

Caseload

During 2002, 2,180 new cases were filed with the Michigan Supreme Court. There were 2,052 cases completed in 2002. At the close of the year, 1,204 cases were pending before the court.

The majority of the new cases filed (97%) were applications for leave to appeal. Of the new cases filed, 39% were civil cases and 61% were criminal cases. Of the 2,052 cases disposed of during 2002, 1,720 (84%) were disposed of by denial of leave to appeal, 178 (9%) by final orders without opinions, 87 (4%) by opinions, and 67 (3%) by dismissals and withdrawals.

TYPES OF SUPREME COURT CASE FILINGS, 2002

Filings	Number	Percent
Applications for Leave	2,122	(97%)
Applications Prior to Court of Appeals Decision	8	} (3%)
Mandamus/Superintending Control — Attorney Grievance Commission/ Board of Law Examiners	37	
Judicial Tenure Commission Cases	8	
Certified Questions from Federal Courts	1	
Miscellaneous	4	
TOTAL	2,180	

DISTRIBUTION OF SUPREME COURT CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES, 2002

Cases	Number	Percent
Civil Cases Filed	861	(39%)
Criminal Cases Filed	1,319	(61%)
TOTAL	2,180	(100%)

SUPREME COURT CASE DISPOSITION, BY TYPE, 2002

Dispositions	Number	Percent
Completed by Opinions	87	(4%)
Completed by Final Orders Without Opinions	178	(9%)
Completed by Denial of Leave to Appeal	1,720	(84%)
Completed by Dismissals and Withdrawals	67	(3%)
TOTAL	2,052	(100%)

Administrative Functions

In addition to serving as the state's court of last resort, the Michigan Supreme Court manages the state court system. As manager of the Michigan court system, the court has undertaken with the legislative and executive branches, state and local, to improve the system statewide for greater efficiency and accountability to the public. This endeavor includes:

- advancing the implementation of the family division of circuit court for greater efficiency and convenience for families;
- developing a statewide court information management system;
- reforming jury management practices;
- overseeing the progress of seven trial court demonstration projects;
- supporting the work of therapeutic drug courts throughout the state.

JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT

Term expires

MAURA D. CORRIGAN, Chief Justice, Grosse Pointe Park	Jan. 1, 2007
MICHAEL F. CAVANAGH, East Lansing	Jan. 1, 2007
ELIZABETH A. WEAVER, Traverse City	Jan. 1, 2011
MARILYN KELLY, Bloomfield Hills	Jan. 1, 2005
CLIFFORD W. TAYLOR, Laingsburg	Jan. 1, 2009
ROBERT P. YOUNG, JR., Detroit	Jan. 1, 2011
STEPHEN J. MARKMAN, Mason	Jan. 1, 2005

CORBIN R. DAVIS, Clerk
INGER Z. MEYER, Deputy Clerk
DANILLO ANSELMO, Reporter of Decisions
CARL GROMEK, Chief of Staff
MICHAEL GADOLA, Supreme Court and SCAO Counsel
LINDA MOHNEY RHODUS, Administrative Counsel
MARK GATES, Deputy Supreme Court Counsel
E. RONALD STADNIKA, Finance Director
MICHAEL BENEDICT, Human Resources Director
MARCIA MCBRIEN, Public Information Officer
DAVE PALAZZOLO, Crier

SUPREME COURT COMMISSIONERS

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FRANK GRECO, Deputy Chief Commissioner
DON ATKINS TIMOTHY RAUBINGER
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DAN BRUBAKER MICHAEL SCHMEDLEN
KATHLEEN FOSTER JURGEN SKOPPEK
BRUCE JOHNSON CALVIN STERK
NELSON LEAVITT ANNE-MARIE VOICE
DEBRA MCGUIRE MICHAEL WELLMAN
SHARI OBERG DANIEL WRIGHT
JOHN PARKER PATRICK WRIGHT

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